

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFING GUIDANCE

1. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE WAS PROVIDED DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN FOR NOON BRIEFING SEPTEMBER 20 IN ANTICIPATION OF POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BASED ON AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KEWAL SINGH'S INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES THE SAME DAY. HOWEVER, NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED.

2. Q. HAS THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVED A PROTEST FROM THE INDIAN EMBASSY ON THE GRANT OF POLITICAL ASYLUM TO RAM JETHMALANI, THE FORMER HEAD OF THE INDIAN BAR COUNCIL?

A. THE INDIANS RAISED THIS MATTER IN DELHI AND WASHINGTON. WE POINTED OUT THAT THE CASE WAS IN FACT HANDLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH WELL-ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, AND ASYLUM STATUS WAS GRANTED ONLY AFTER A CAREFUL REVIEW OF ALL THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FACTS. THERE HAS BEEN NO EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC CORRES-

PONDENCE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THE CASE.

3. Q. IS IT TRUE THAT THE U.S. OFFICIAL SAID THAT THIS ASYLUM WOULD NOT BE A PRECEDENT BASED ON HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WAS AN OUTSTANDING WARRANT FOR THE ARREST OF MR. JETHMALANI?

A. EACH CASE IS CONSIDERED ON ITS INDIVIDUAL MERITS.

4. Q. ARE OTHER REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM FROM INDIAN NATIONALS PENDING?

A. IT IS DEPARTMENT POLICY NOT TO DISCLOSE OR COMMENT ON APPLICANTS FOR ASYLUM WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED. AS YOU MAY KNOW, ASYLUM REQUESTS ARE FILED INITIALLY WITH IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE.

5. Q. WHAT IS THE U.S. POSITION ON THE INDIAN STATE OF EMERGENCY?

A. PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAVE EXPRESSED ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS THE TRADITIONAL AMERICAN PREFERENCE FOR DEMOCRATIC NORMS; HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT FELT THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO COMMENT ON INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA.

6. Q. DOES THE DEPARTMENT AGREE WITH AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SINGH'S ASSESSMENT THAT THERE "IS NO OBVIOUS OBSTACLE TO IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS" WITH INDIA?

A. INDIA IS AN IMPORTANT COUNTRY WITH WHOM WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE A MATURE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP. THIS REMAINS OUR OBJECTIVE. WE SHARE THE HOPE THAT OUR FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH INDIA WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN.
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